



Forest Service

George Washington &
Jefferson National Forests
5162 Valleypointe Pkwy.
Roanoke, VA 24019
(540) 265-5100

www.fs.usda.gov/gwj/



News Release

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Forest Service Seeks Comments on Authorizing Surveys for Additional Routes for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline

(March 27, 2015) Roanoke, VA-- The Forest Service is seeking comments on whether to allow surveys on proposed alternative routes crossing the George Washington National Forest for the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline in Highland and Augusta counties, Virginia. The alternate routes cross the George Washington National Forest in three areas. One is located along the West Virginia/Virginia border, near the intersection of Mill Gap Road and Lower Back Creek Road in Highland County, Virginia. The second is located south of Lyndhurst in Augusta County, and the third is located southeast of Wintergreen, near the intersection of the Blue Ridge Parkway and Reeds Gap Road. This last area includes a crossing of the Appalachian Trail corridor. The three proposed areas combined total 4.4 miles on the George Washington National Forest.

Proposed environmental surveys include surveying wetlands, water, soil, and suitable habitat for sensitive species, including federally listed threatened and endangered plants and animals. Surveys will also record and document cultural resources and invasive species. The Forest Service will use public comments and an environmental review to decide whether to issue a permit for the environmental and cultural resource surveys on the George Washington National Forest. Comments are being accepted through Tuesday, April 14, 2015.

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“The information gathered from these surveys is needed for federal agencies to make informed decisions on whether or not to allow the construction and operation of the proposed natural gas pipeline, and if allowed, to avoid, or reduce the impacts to sensitive resources” explains Forest Supervisor Tom Speaks.

“It is important to remember that allowing these survey activities does not mean we are allowing the construction of a pipeline,” reminds Speaks. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), as the lead federal agency, is currently holding public meetings and soliciting comments on the construction of the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline. FERC will conduct an in-depth environmental analysis on private and public lands, with many opportunities for public comments.

Activities associated with the proposed surveys include:

- Survey crews walking the corridor. No vehicles will be used except to access the corridor using public and existing Forest Roads.
- Flagging will be placed along the center-line.
- Using hand tools to remove minor amounts of brush to navigate the route; saplings or limbs removed will be less than two inches in diameter.
- Placing biodegradable survey ribbon, flagging, survey stakes, and pin flags within the corridor and removed after all surveys are conducted.
- Conduct test pits for wetland surveys and shovel tests for cultural resource surveys. Soil will be replaced each day prior to leaving the sample site.
- Identification and documentation of cultural resources, sensitive species habitat, and invasive species. No flora, fauna, or cultural resources will be removed.

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Comments must be received by April 14, 2015 and may be submitted by:

Email: comments-southern-georgewashington-jefferson@fs.fed.us

FAX: (540) 265-5145

Mail or Hand Deliver:

USDA Forest Service
Atlantic Coast Pipeline Survey Comments
5162 Valleypointe Parkway
Roanoke, VA 24019

Hand-delivered comments must be received during our normal business hours of Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

More information, including maps and specifics of survey activities can be found on our website at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/gwj/> or by calling (540) 265-5100.

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